

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the above-identified application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): An order-acceptance management apparatus for assigning a rank to an orderer and implementing acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance with the rank assigned to the orderer, comprising:

allocation decision means for deciding an allocation ratio for each of groups corresponding to a number of ranks;

inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a number of units of the commodity in stock from storage means in which the number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a number of the groups corresponding to a number of ranks in accordance with the allocation ratio; and

determination means for determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

wherein, if the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a first group corresponding to a first rank assigned to the orderer is not less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination means determines that the issued order is accepted and the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock stored in the storage means that belongs to said first group is replaced with a number that is difference value between the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to the first group and the number of units of the commodity of the issued order, and

if the allocated number of units of the commodity that belongs to the first group corresponding to the first rank assigned to the orderer is less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination means determines that the issued order is not accepted and determines whether there is an allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a second group corresponding to a second rank lower than the first rank without acceptance of an order of the first group.

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Cancelled)

Claim 4 (Currently amended): The apparatus according to claim 3 ~~1~~, further comprising dealings-performance acquisition means for acquiring information concerning dealings performance from storage means in which dealings performance on a per-rank basis has been stored;

wherein said allocation decision means decides the allocation ratio based upon the information concerning dealings performance acquired by said dealings-performance acquisition means.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

delivery-schedule acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored; and

means for deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired by said delivery-schedule acquisition means.

Claim 6 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said apparatus is connected via a communication channel to a computer that issues the order.

Claim 7 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising means for notifying the computer of whether the issued order will be accepted or not based upon the determination made by said determination means.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

delivery-schedule acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored;

means for deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired by said delivery-schedule acquisition means; and

means for notifying the computer of the delivery date that has been decided.

Claim 9 (Original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a computer connected to said apparatus is provided with the storage means.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn - Currently amended): An order-acceptance management method for assigning a rank to an orderer and implementing acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance with the rank assigned to the orderer, comprising:

an allocation decision step of deciding an allocation ratio for each of groups corresponding to a number of ranks;

an inventory acquisition step of acquiring information concerning a number of units of the commodity in stock from storage means in which the number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to ~~a number of the~~ groups ~~corresponding to a number of ranks in accordance with the allocation ratio;~~ and

a determination step of determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

wherein, if the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a first group corresponding to a first rank assigned to the orderer is not less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination step determines that the issued order is accepted and the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock stored in the storage means that belongs to the first group is replaced with a number that is difference value between the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to the first group and the number of units of the commodity of the issued order, and

if the allocated number of units of the commodity that belongs to the first group corresponding to the first rank assigned to the orderer is less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination step determines that the issued order is not accepted and determines whether there is an allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a second group corresponding to a second rank lower than the first rank without acceptance of an order of the first group.

Claim 11 (Canceled)

Claim 12 (Cancelled)

Claim 13 (Withdrawn - Currently amended): The method according to claim ~~12~~ 10, further comprising a dealings-performance acquisition step of acquiring information concerning dealings performance from storage means in which dealings performance on a per-rank basis has been stored;

wherein said allocation decision step decides the allocation ratio based upon the information concerning dealings performance acquired at said dealings-performance acquisition step.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): The method according to claim 10, further comprising:

a delivery-schedule acquisition step of acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored; and

a step of deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired at said delivery-schedule acquisition step.

Claim 15 (Currently amended): A storage medium on which has been recorded a program for causing a computer to function as the following means in order to assign a rank to an orderer and implement acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance with the rank assigned to the orderer:

allocation decision means for deciding an allocation ratio for each of groups corresponding to a number of ranks;

inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a number of units of the commodity in stock from storage means in which the number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to ~~a number of~~ the groups corresponding to a number of ranks in accordance with the allocation ratio; and

determination means for determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

wherein, if the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a first group corresponding to a first rank assigned to the orderer is not less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination means determines that the issued order is accepted and the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock stored in the storage means that belongs to said first group is replaced with a number that is difference value between the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to the first group and the number of units of the commodity of the issued order, and

if the allocated number of units of the commodity that belongs to the first group corresponding to the first rank assigned to the orderer is less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination step determines that the issued order is not accepted and determines whether there is an allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a second group corresponding to a second rank lower than the first rank without acceptance of an order of the first group.

Claim 16 (Canceled)

Claim 17 (Cancelled)

Claim 18 (Currently amended): The storage medium according to claim ~~17~~ 15, wherein said program includes a program for causing the computer to function as dealings-performance acquisition means for acquiring information concerning dealings performance from storage means in which dealings performance on a per-rank basis has been stored;

wherein said allocation decision means decides the allocation ratio based upon the information concerning dealings performance acquired by said dealings-performance acquisition means.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein said program includes a program for causing the computer to function as:

delivery-schedule acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored;
and

means for deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired by said delivery-schedule acquisition means.

Claim 20 (Withdrawn - Currently amended): A program for causing a computer to function as the following means in order to assign a rank to an orderer and implement acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance with the rank assigned to the orderer:

allocation decision means for deciding an allocation ratio for each of groups corresponding to a number of ranks;

inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a number of units of the commodity in stock from storage means in which the number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to ~~a number of the groups corresponding to a number of ranks~~ in accordance with the allocation ratio; and

determination means for determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

wherein, if the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a first group corresponding to a first rank assigned to the orderer is not less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination means determines that the issued order is accepted and the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock stored in

the storage means that belongs to the first group is replaced with a number that is difference value between the allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to the first group and the number of units of the commodity of the issued order, and

if the allocated number of units of the commodity that belongs to the first group corresponding to the first rank assigned to the orderer is less than the number of units of the commodity in the issued order, said determination means determines that the issued order is not accepted and determines whether there is an allocated number of units of the commodity in stock that belongs to a second group corresponding to a second rank lower than the first rank without acceptance of an order of the first group.